STEVE SOUTHERLAND, II

2ND DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

Washington, **DC** 20515-0902

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The Honorable John S. Pistole Administrator Transportation Security Administration 601 South 12th Street Arlington, VA 20598

Dear Administrator Pistole:

I write today regarding a troubling report that Transportation Security Administration officials at Greater Rochester International Airport in Monroe County, New York have authorized valet parking attendants to conduct vehicle searches without the prior knowledge or expressed consent of the vehicle's owner.

At a time when the American people's faith in their government has plummeted to historic lows, we can ill afford to have this sacred trust diminished any further. As the home of two major airports, two seaports and countless tourism opportunities, my district recognizes the importance of ensuring safe and secure travel. However, my constituents also closely guard their God-given personal right to privacy.

On behalf of the people of my district, I request answers to the following questions regarding the TSA's statutory authority to conduct searches such as those at Greater Rochester International Airport:

- What is the Constitutional authority for authorizing valet parking attendants to search unattended vehicles?
- What training and screening is required of valet attendants prior to conducting a search?
- What steps are taken to provide notice to vehicle owners and what type of informed consent is requested before a search is conducted?
- Prior to news reports on the matter, were you personally aware of this practice?
- Are you aware of any other airport's travelers who are subjected to this search policy?
- What steps were taken to ensure the privacy and protect the property of vehicle owners?
- Given their close proximity to the airport terminal, are cars temporarily parked in the drop-off or pick-up lanes also subject to searches?

According to the TSA's Privacy Office overview, the TSA aims to "respect and protect the privacy of individuals affected by our transportation security activities." I look forward to your timely response in addressing how the aforementioned activities respect and protect the privacy rights of the individual.

Sincerely,

Steve Southerland, II

United States Representative